United Nations A/54/PV.100

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fourth session

100th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/54/915/Add.2)

The President: In the letter contained in document A/54/915/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/54/915 and Add.1, Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Saint Lucia, Turkmenistan, Vanuatu and Yemen have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 22 *(continued)*

Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal (A/54/971)

The President: The General Assembly will now resume consideration of agenda item 22, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

In this connection, I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/54/971, which contains a solemn appeal that I made on 1 September 2000 in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce.

I will now read the solemn appeal:

"On 24 November 1999, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/34, in which it urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the games of the XXVII Olympiad, which will be held at Sydney, Australia, from 15 September to 1 October 2000.

"The idea of the Olympic Truce dates back to an ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheiria*, in keeping with which all hostilities would cease during the Games.

"Today, the Olympic Truce has become an expression of mankind's desire to build a world based on the rules of fair competition, peace, humanity and reconciliation. Moreover, the Olympic Truce epitomizes a bridge from the old and wise tradition to the most compelling purpose of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security. As the most visible illustration of this connection in goals and aspirations between the Olympic movement and the United Nations, the flag of the United Nations now flies at all competition sites of the Olympic Games.

"The forthcoming Sydney Games — the first Olympic Games of the twenty-first century and of the new millennium — should be a harmonious, athlete-oriented and environmentally

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committed event. The period of the Games, and beyond, should provide an opportunity for dialogue, reconciliation and the search for durable solutions for the restoration of peace in all areas of conflict, where the first victims are the children, the youth and women.

"Humanity's quest is for a world free of hatred and war, a world where ideals of peace, goodwill and mutual respect form the basis of relations among countries. That goal may still remain elusive, but if the Olympic Truce can help us to bring about even a brief respite from conflict and strife, it will send a powerful message of hope to the international community. With the United Nations flag flying in Sydney at the XXVII Olympic Games, adherence to the Truce will gain even greater symbolism.

"I therefore solemnly appeal to all States to demonstrate their commitment to the spirit of fraternity and understanding among peoples by observing the Olympic Truce during the Sydney Games.

"I urge all those who are now engaged in armed struggle — for whatever reasons and wherever it might be — to suspend hostilities in keeping with the observance. I urge everybody, individually and collectively, to take the initiative to abide by the Olympic Truce as a way of promoting goodwill and encouraging the peaceful settlement of conflicts in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 22?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 49 *(continued)*

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

(b) The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/54/L.89)

The President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 49, entitled "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations".

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/54/L.89.

In view of the need to dispose of this item expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.89. In this connection, since the draft resolution has been circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

"As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I will take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Humaimidi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation already presented its comments on paragraph 9, bullet 8, dealing with sanctions. We wish to reaffirm here that this eighth bullet contains a double-standard provision relating to economic sanctions. The paragraph does not reflect the point of view of the international community and United Nations Member States.

As expressed many times, General Assembly resolution 51/242, adopted by consensus, puts forward the basic principles — namely, the need to exhaust all peaceful means before resorting to sanctions, which can only be considered as a last resort. Economic sanctions, if necessary, can be imposed only when they

are in conformity with the principles of the Charter, after having determined the objectives of the sanctions, having a clear time table and having included provisions allowing for a regular re-examination of the sanctions and precise conditions linked to lifting them. Sanctions cannot be used for the purposes of pure revenge or reprisal.

Unfortunately, the United States and the United Kingdom and their Kuwaiti agents have insisted on maintaining this subparagraph as it is. This paragraph allows innocent populations to be targeted through sanctions. My delegation is surprised to see how this double standard policy can be so flagrantly used in such a United Nations document, adopted on the eve of the new millennium.

Why are we asking for a reduction of the harmful effects of the economic sanctions against innocent populations, and at the same time ask that they be removed from third countries? It would be better to remove the harmful effects of sanctions from innocent populations as well as third parties. My delegation has shown great flexibility in order to reach a consensus text. Unfortunately, once again we are forced to note that the United States, the United Kingdom and their Kuwaiti agents have insisted on keeping this paragraph, which has no legitimacy, either legal or moral. The delegation of this country cannot accept such a shameful text.

The President: As President of the General Assembly, I must take very serious exception to your implication that I too, as President of the General Assembly, am somehow under the control of those countries you mentioned, or others. There were more countries than those that you have mentioned who did not support you. You have the right to place on record the position of your Government, but I take very serious exception to the implication contained in the statement you have just made. I was fair to every single delegation, and the ruling that I made was based on a more than clear consensus of those who were present and joined the consensus.

We have heard the last speaker in the debate on sub-item (b) of agenda item 49. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.89. The Assembly will now take a decision on that draft resolution, entitled "Draft United Nations Millennium Declaration". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.89?

Draft resolution A/54/L.89 was adopted (resolution 54/282).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the European Union, we are happy with the work that you, Mr. President, have carried out. You have said several times in informal meetings that you were a major combatant and you have proved once again that you are a major combatant for the United Nations and for the success of the Millennium Summit.

On behalf of France, I have a brief statement to make. France has a reservation to the idea of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. In relation to the options which can lead to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, we would recall our preference for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Ms. King (United States of America): On behalf of the United States I would like to make some comments on the document which we are transmitting to the fifty-fifth General Assembly to be read as a declaration at the end of the Millennium Summit to be held from 6 to 8 September.

Earlier this year, the fifty-fourth General Assembly accepted an important challenge. The challenge was to draw upon the observations so eloquently expressed in the Secretary-General's March report, a discussion of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, in order to develop a declaration which would allow the Heads of State and Government who are even now converging on New York to reaffirm their faith in the United Nations and its Charter.

I do not need to tell you, Mr. President, or anyone else gathered in this room, that the draft we have before us is the result of extensive negotiation and significant compromise by many, if not all, member States. Our combined goal was a consensus document summarizing values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century, and identifying key objectives for the future. While the document we have before us generally meets that goal, the United States has reservations about certain aspects of this text.

Specifically, in the section referring to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the document continues to refer to keeping all options open, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. The United States has strong and often repeated reservations to such a conference.

The United States welcomes the reference in this document to the issue of climate change and is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We believe strongly that climate change is a global problem requiring a global solution. We also note that economic growth and emissions growth need not go together. Over the past two years, United States economic growth has been 4 per cent or higher, and growth in greenhouse emissions has been 1 per cent or lower.

With respect to the Kyoto Protocol, the United States notes that ratification in many countries, including the United States, is subject to the approval of national legislators, and that no reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are required by the Protocol, unless and until that agreement is ratified and enters into force.

Finally, in the important section focused on meeting the special needs of Africa, the United States regrets that the paragraph describing measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, made reference to debt cancellation. The United States believes that it would have been more accurate and useful to refer to the need, which the United States recognizes and supports, for member States and international financial institutions to work with the Governments of African countries to develop programmes of debt relief, including debt forgiveness, taking into account demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In view of the adoption of draft resolution A/54/L.89, by which the Assembly decides to refer the draft United Nations Millennium Declaration to the Millennium Summit, and especially in view of its reference to striving for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the Russian delegation wishes to note that progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament is necessary for the implementation of agreements already in existence. We should strive for the elimination of the nuclear threat in the context of the strengthening of strategic stability.

Mr. Wang Donghua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As always, the Chinese delegation has supported you, Mr. President, in all your efforts to achieve a good draft United Nations Millennium Declaration, and the draft text we have just adopted is indeed a good one. The Chinese delegation, moreover, is in agreement with it.

Turning to paragraph 9, bullet 9, on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, the Chinese delegation understands the views of some countries on the convening of an international conference on nuclear dangers. It is our hope that such a conference can be convened within the existing disarmament framework.

Mr. Mekprayoonthong (Thailand): We would like to express a concern of which we have spoken before regarding paragraph 9, bullet 10. We would have preferred the words "especially by making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures" to have been deleted.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): Speaking on behalf of the Nigerian delegation and of the Group of 77, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to congratulate you and your team on your outstanding work on the draft United Nations Millennium Declaration, a text of which we can all be proud and which undoubtedly will stand the test of time.

I want only to add my suggestion that the delegations that have indicated reservations here and there should please reconsider, because this declaration will be adopted at the summit level. I make a special appeal to them to waive such reservations; this is a draft Declaration that we should all endorse because we are in a new millennium.

Ms. Álvarez Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first of all, Mr. President, to thank you and your team for your efforts to formulate a document worthy of being referred to the Millennium Summit. We consider that the draft Declaration is for the most part well balanced. Despite the varied perceptions of the United Nations and its role in the world, which we have again seen reflected in recent debates, the text has succeeded in gaining mostly positive assessments, with only a few potential reservations.

I am pleased to say again that Cuba has no reservations about the draft resolution we have just adopted. We are pleased that the draft Declaration reaffirms our faith in the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We agree that support for multilateralism should result in all States sharing responsibility for the conduct of international relations in the new century. Cuba remains a steadfast defender of respect for international law.

We view it as very positive that the draft Declaration recognizes nuclear disarmament as a priority; here we reaffirm our support for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

We would have liked to see a clearer distinction between poverty eradication on the one hand and development on the other, and we note that references to the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights are absent from the section on human rights, democracy and good governance.

Strengthening the United Nations in the twenty-first century is undoubtedly an important step towards attaining the goals and commitments set out in the draft Declaration.

Like any other work of human endeavour, the draft Declaration could be improved. But we join the consensus in the spirit of flexibility and compromise that characterizes Cuba's activities in the United Nations and its relations with all States that cherish peace and solidarity.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): In a spirit of goodwill and cooperation, and because of our commitment to the success of the Millennium Summit, Israel joined the consensus on the resolution just adopted, and we will join the consensus on the Millennium Declaration. We will, however, submit a formal reservation, to be placed on the record of the United Nations, with regard to the second bullet in paragraph 26.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first if all to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on this excellent draft Declaration, and on the outstanding work done to come up with a document that, in the opinion of my delegation, is very satisfactory. Colombia is completely satisfied with every paragraph.

However, we would like to place on record that my delegation entered into consultations in good faith on the possibility of including a reference to the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. We regret that this was not included in the draft Declaration.

The President: I should now like to express my very sincere thanks to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala and Ambassador Michael John Powles of New Zealand, as well as to other collaborators, for their time, excellence, patience and understanding. All of them were very helpful to me and made invaluable contributions to the draft Declaration. I am sure that members of the General Assembly join me in extending to them our appreciation.

I now call on the representative of Kuwait, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has no wish to speak at great length. We are pleased that the Assembly has adopted the draft United Nations Millennium Declaration, and we congratulate you, Mr. President, on that text.

At the same time, my delegation wishes to reply to comments made by the Iraqi delegation, which referred to Kuwait as the "agent" of certain States. This is Iraq's style of dealing with Kuwait. We simply work together with all other members of the Assembly and express our views. Iraq accuses us and other countries of arrogance. More than 180 countries have adopted the Millennium Declaration, but Iraq insists that Kuwait has no right to express its views. The delegation of Iraq continues its practice of offering its own views but not wishing to hear from Kuwait. We reject that, along with the accusation that we are arrogant. My delegation affirms that no State has the right to drag Kuwait into matters that are none of its concern. We are a sovereign country and certainly have the right to express our views.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 49?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 38 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/54/47)

Draft decision (A/54/47, para. 31)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider the draft decision contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 31 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I should like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and to Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, the two very able Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, who have so ably continued during this session to conduct the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. We are now into our seventh year, and I hope that, sooner rather than later, we will be able to come back to the General Assembly and receive a progress report on this matter.

I am sure members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our heartfelt appreciation. They certainly have mine.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 38?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 49 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

(a) United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this sub-item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this sub-item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this sub-item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 49 and of agenda item 49 as a whole.

Agenda item 59

Strengthening of the United Nations system

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 59.

Agenda item 60

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 60.

Agenda item 61

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 61.

Agenda item 63

Question of Cyprus

The President: Members may recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 63.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the reopening of the consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 99: letter from the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/54/952)

The President: Sub-item (g) of agenda item 99 is entitled "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership".

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/213, of 22 December 1999, I requested, by a letter dated 28 April 2000, Mr. Roble Olhaye of Djibouti, Chairman of the Second Committee, to undertake, on my behalf, consultations with Member States on the date, modalities, nature of the outcome and focus of the discussions of the second high-level dialogue on the theme of "Responding to globalization: facilitating the integration of developing countries into the world economy in the twenty-first century".

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a letter dated 30 June 2000 from the Chairman of the Second Committee, circulated in document A/54/952, in which he reported the results of his consultations.

To enable the General Assembly to take note of this letter, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 99.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen the consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 99?

It was so decided.

The President: Representatives are aware that sub-item (g) of agenda item 99 was allocated to the Second Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (g) of agenda item 99 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to propose that the Assembly proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 99.

I see no objection. We shall therefore proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 99

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(g) Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the letter from the Chairman of the Second Committee contained in document A/54/952?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 99 and of agenda item 99 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 122

Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 122.

Agenda item 134

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 135

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 135.

Agenda item 138

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 139

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The President: Members will recall that, on 17 September 1999, the Assembly decided to include agenda item 140 in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 167 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note verbale (A/54/966)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 98th plenary meeting on 15 June 2000, the General Assembly adopted under agenda item 167 resolution 54/280.

In connection with this item, I wish to draw the attention of members to document A/54/966 containing a note verbale dated 18 August 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations, in which it is requested that item 167 be included in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer further consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: In the same note verbale, the Government of Austria further indicated that it would like this item to be considered directly in plenary meeting. This information will be conveyed to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

This concludes our consideration of agenda item 167.

Agenda item 170

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Note verbale (A/54/969)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly included item 170 on the agenda of the fifty-fourth session.

In connection with this item, I should like to draw the attention of members to document A/54/969 containing a note verbale dated 21 August 2000 from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which it is requested that item 170 be included in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The President: In the note verbale contained in document A/54/969, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo indicated that it would like this item to be considered directly in plenary meeting. This information will be conveyed to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

This concludes our consideration of agenda item 170.

Agenda item 176

Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects

Draft resolution (A/54/L.88/Rev.1)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution entitled "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in all its aspects", contained in document A/54/L.88/Rev.1. I am pleased to announce that this draft resolution has been sponsored by over 70 delegations representing all regions of the world.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the sponsors and to all delegations whose constructive participation in the informal consultations resulted in the consensus text of this draft resolution.

I want to stress that HIV/AIDS, we are convinced, is an epidemic of global proportions with enormous human and social ramifications that go far beyond the province of health alone. The issue of HIV/AIDS has already been taken up at different international forums, both within the United Nations system and outside. It is encouraging that this increased attention to the problem of AIDS has started to bring in the first positive results.

At the same time, it is absolutely clear that only the concerted and coordinated efforts of the international community will be able to successfully address the problem of HIV/AIDS. My country, which has also been hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, spreading at an alarming rate in recent years, believes that it is high time for the United Nations to elaborate a comprehensive agenda for action against this epidemic. The General Assembly should, in our view, play the central role in resolving this issue of global concern.

We do believe that the draft resolution that is now before us is intended to start this process. It will enable the General Assembly to make its significant contribution to the struggle of the international community against AIDS by convening the special session, which, in our view, is the most appropriate forum for this purpose.

The main goal of this draft resolution is stated in its first operative paragraph: to convene a special session of the General Assembly as soon as possible, preferably in May 2001, but not later than the end of its fifty-sixth regular session, in order to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects, as well as to coordinate and intensify international efforts to combat it.

Draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1 reflects the deep concern of the international community over the accelerating spread of human immunodeficiency virus, which has already infected millions of people worldwide, and over the resulting increase in cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The draft resolution also urges Member States and observers to ensure their representation at the special session at a high political level.

To properly arrange this crucial event, the draft envisages that the exact date of the special session, as well as the modalities, participation in and organization of the preparatory process and of the special session itself should be finalized, at the earliest opportunity, at its fifty-fifth session.

For this purpose, it proposes to include in the agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects".

In conclusion, allow me to express my sincere hope that draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1 will gain the broadest possible support and will be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of France, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Bossière (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the other associated countries, Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member of

the European Economic Area, Iceland, that also associate themselves with this statement.

The challenge of the AIDS epidemic is dreadful in its brutality and breadth. Attention needs to be focused upon it. We know that this can only be done if all the people concerned, at the local, national, regional and international levels, are fully committed through joint and coordinated efforts and actions. The United Nations and the General Assembly of its Member States, in particular, is an irreplaceable forum in this respect. This is the reason for the support of the European Union for this draft resolution at this session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The European Union hopes that, as of the first weeks of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, a concentrated and effective preparatory process will allow all delegations to decide together on the ways and means of participating in this session and in its organization.

Thus, we will have to decide upon the appropriate timing for the holding of this session. The time-frame established by the present resolution is firm and realistic. It is firm, because it establishes the objective of not being deferred beyond September 2002. It is realistic, because we all know that, as of now, the year 2001 is already heavily burdened with high-level meetings and the preparatory procedures which will relate to essential subjects — the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, follow-up to the World Summit for Children, the World Conference on Racism and the follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, and so forth.

The European Union wishes to thank the authors of the draft resolution — Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Nigeria, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. They were at the start of this process, and thanks to them, today there are a large number of us sponsoring the text of the draft resolution before us.

Finally, the European Union also wishes to thank all of those delegations who have worked most constructively and transparently throughout the informal sessions towards working out a consensus.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Rahmtalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have taken the floor to correct an error in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution which we are about to adopt, because the Arabic text of this paragraph indicates that it would be preferable if this session took place in May 2000. What we need to say here is "2001". I would like to ask the Secretariat to make the necessary correction.

The President: I call on the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Adawa (Kenya): My delegation cannot remain silent on this draft resolution. It is unfortunate that the name of Kenya does not appear in the sponsorship of this draft when it is actually effectively participating in the very process that initiated the issue and the ideas on this matter. At the same time, my delegation cannot remain silent on the draft knowing that the adverse, negative impact of HIV/AIDS has actually eroded the very socio-economic gains made by the developing countries, in Africa in particular, and Kenya.

It is in this context that my delegation has co-sponsored the draft and fully supports all that is indicated in it.

The President: The situation is being rectified. I will shortly read out the list of the additional sponsors.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Ahipeaud Guebo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire would like to be included as a sponsor of the resolution under consideration.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1. These are the names of the additional co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Guatemala, Malta, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United States of America, Belarus, Iceland, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Myanmar, Haiti, Suriname, Kenya, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon.

Ms. Gras (France) (*spoke in French*): Looking at the documents submitted today by the Secretariat, I note that you have just now orally added the Netherlands as sponsor. None of the names of the other member States of the European Union appear, although all 15 of us are sponsors of the draft resolution. It seems there is a difference between the French and English versions of the document.

The President: I call on the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services to clarify this issue.

Mr. Jin (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): On this issue, we have taken note of the statement of the French delegation, and will ensure that the necessary correction is made in the French version.

With regard to the statement of programme budget implications in connection with draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1, I wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the following. In view of the fact that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee could not meet as the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly is due to conclude today, the programme budget implications will be presented for examination and decision by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

Mr. Sabo (Niger) (*spoke in French*): The Niger delegation wishes with other delegations to join the list of co-sponsors to draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1 relating to the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.88/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/283).

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly: Items 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 27, 37, 42 to 44, 46 to 48, 50, 97, 101, 106, 110, 116, 117 to 121, 123 to 133, 136, 137, 141 to 151, 160, 163, 164, 166, 169, 172, 173 and 175.

As members are aware, these items, with the exception of sub-item (b) of agenda item 101 entitled "Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries", item 123 entitled "Joint Inspection Unit", item 150 entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone", and item 163 entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B", have been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of these items at the present session is concluded?

It is so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President: Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we have now come to the end of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, and it is time for me now to prepare handing over the gavel to my worthy successor.

We had a unique and most memorable experience. It was the first-ever session of the General Assembly which straddled two centuries and two millenniums. Foremost among the most memorable things was the responsibility for preparing for the unprecedented United Nations Millennium Summit of heads of State or Government. The world will be witnessing the largest gathering of world leaders. This is really making history, and the final declaration will put meat on the bones.

We held three special sessions. The first one was held in September last year, on small island developing States and their special needs. And the other two took place in June this year, one as a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in 1995, and the other as a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995; these two special sessions took place in New York and in Geneva respectively.

All three special sessions adopted action-oriented declarations and platforms for implementation, taking into consideration the outstanding progress already achieved by Member States and other key international and national stakeholders. I recommend that the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly pay close attention to these important outcome documents and give effect to their recommendations.

We actively pursued the agenda of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. Regrettably, the debate is into its seventh year. Once again, it proved impossible for Member States to resolve the major sticking points, among them the admission of new permanent members, the exercise of the veto and some problematic procedural matters.

There has, however, been some noticeable progress as regards the working methods of the

Security Council. The Council has begun opening up its meetings to the other United Nations Member States as well as interacting informally with non-governmental organizations. This openness and flexibility must be encouraged. The fundamental problem seems to be a manifest lack of political will on the part of some permanent members. In the light of this gridlock, which is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, I am of the view that we should revisit the fixed position of a "package deal". There are some new and creative ideas to move the debate forward.

In the meantime, I hope that the growing sense of urgency among a large number of States about the need to reform, enlarge and democratize the Security Council will be embraced by all. I invite representatives to carefully study the latest report of the aforementioned working group. It contains practical proposals on the way forward.

Moreover, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 53/92 and 54/234, I established a working group to operationalize the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in his 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the consequences thereof in Africa. The working group has submitted specific proposals to overcome any bottlenecks, taking into account the outstanding recommendations of the Economic and Social Council. Those proposals are attached to the report that is now before the fifth-fifth session of the Assembly.

On another, but related, issue, the Assembly also decided to convene in 2001 a critical intergovernmental conference on financing for development. This is a topical subject which is today at the core of the current debate on development, poverty eradication, debt cancellation, full employment and prosperity for all. I see it in the context of a global challenge which hinges on both political will and resource mobilization, something which I have talked about. In this context, I undertook setting up a bureau of the preparatory committee for that conference, and its planning activities have commenced in earnest. The participation in the forthcoming high-level conference by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and other actors is indispensable from the word go. We need such partnerships in order to fulfil the goals and development plans of the United Nations. I commend the General Assembly for having launched what I consider to be a people-driven rescue operation.

The United Nations Millennium Summit will start tomorrow in this Hall. It will indeed be a historic moment both for the United Nations and for humanity at large. By the time the general debate starts next week, we will be celebrating its outcome and paying tribute to the world leaders for their collective will for world peace, cooperation and development and for their reaffirmation of support for the United Nations.

It was my privilege to have presided over the preparations for the Millennium Summit, and I want to thank all delegations for their cooperation in bringing the preparations to a successful conclusion. The Millennium Summit will adopt a final declaration. It is expected to be a politically authoritative document of historic import commensurate with the uniqueness of the Summit itself for all times.

During the course of my presidency, I remained faithful to the mandate of the General Assembly, consistent with the United Nations Charter. I tried to give equal importance to all the agenda items and to those issues that came up from different sources, within the context of the mandate given to the Assembly.

There were, however, certain matters that I felt needed extra emphasis because of what I considered to be their critical impact on the United Nations, its Member States and the world at large. Those issues included United Nations reform, humanitarian intervention, women's rights, the plight of children, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty eradication, the debt burden, financing for development, and enhancement of the authority and integrity of the General Assembly. I will elaborate on them on another occasion in my capacity as Namibia's Foreign Minister.

Earlier, I mentioned the protracted and frustrating United Nations reform process. I would like to reiterate my strong views in relation, in particular, to the functions and powers of the General Assembly. The Charter stipulates in various places encompassing and indisputable functions and powers of the Assembly. These qualities have been further enlarged significantly by subsequent United Nations resolutions and decisions, not excluding the role of the General Assembly in the field of peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

During the past 12 months, I personally witnessed the extent to which the authority and integrity of the General Assembly continued to become the object of denigration as a way of currying favour with the other organs. I expressed my concerns on this subject in my acceptance speech last year. It is high time for the Member States, particularly the developing countries, to redress the persistent attacks on and marginalization of this foremost organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly.

From 1960 onwards, the membership of the United Nations has grown by leaps and bounds, and now stands at 188. Today, it will become 189. The General Assembly is unlike any other body: it is the most representative, democratic, transparent and deliberative policy-making organ of all the United Nations. The real business starts here and ends here. This is one of the burning issues so close to my heart, and I will deal with it later. For now, my job is done. That is what I came for: nothing more, nothing less. But the General Assembly endures. And that is my imprimatur.

I am not the first, and I will definitely not be the last, to renew the call for closer and more regularized cooperation, coordination and action among the principal officers of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat. Such institutionalized, routinized and sustained interaction at the highest levels of our Organization will reinforce its capacity to measure success and ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency throughout the system.

This is absolutely vital at a time when rapidly changing international circumstances and challenges require one vision, one voice and joint action through the principal organs of the United Nations. I have not forgotten the others, but these four are at the centre of the day-to-day activities of our Organization.

The United Nations faces challenging times in this century. One of the best ways to ensure its efficacy and performance is for it to be provided with sufficient resources and assured political support. To this end, Member States must pay their assessed and legally obligatory contributions on time, in full and without conditions. This matter has now become a bone of serious contention with serious political repercussions indeed for the United Nations. The current state of the Organization's finances is precarious, and a lasting solution must be found urgently.

During the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Member States will deal once again with a lengthy agenda containing the whole gamut of critical challenges and current problems facing the United Nations. But we know only too well, do we not, that virtually all the debilitating and critical social issues in the world were short-listed, analysed and defined in specific programmes and plans of action a long time ago.

We know this from the United Nations summits of the 1990s that sought to place before the Member States matters of public policy prioritizing and financing for development by the international community. The goals of that people-centred agenda remain intact. They are summed up in the words peace, development, resource mobilization and human security.

If there is determined political will backed up by adequate financial resources, the developing countries and their poor masses will be well placed to deal effectively with the problems of education for all, gender equality, health care, childcare, poverty eradication, rural development, clean water and infrastructure building. I am saying that we all know exactly what the problems, needs and priorities of the poor are. What has been in short supply is the delivery of resources to engender sustainable social development.

Over the last year, I spoke up at every opportunity on the heart-wrenching topic of the suffering of and deliberate violence against the world's children, especially those trapped in armed conflict. I, together with so many other committed co-workers throughout the world, have tried to help sensitize the international community. I have used my office to raise the profile of this issue higher. I want to pay tribute to all United Nations agencies, organizations, offices and individuals the world over who have become part and parcel of this noble crusade.

Their efforts to ensure a better, safer and more humane place for the sake of the leaders of the future and the repositories of human civilization — our children — will sustain this most sacred cause. Our children are tomorrow's champions of dialogue, not of the clash of world civilizations, which make us different but yet unite us in diversity. We are one. We

swim together or we sink together: the choice is ours. But saving children must come first.

The General Assembly this year adopted a new Optional Protocol to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. This welcome achievement will further assist in the betterment of the welfare of children, their protection from child labour, from sexual exploitation, from destructive wars and from shameful pornography.

While I am encouraged by the growing commitment by the Member States of the United Nations to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, quite a lot still remains to be done. The General Assembly must continue to remain vigilant in protecting our children and blame and shame by name and place their tormentors and accomplices.

One of the most urgent challenges today is that of putting the needs of the people at the centre of the global agenda of peace and development and democracy. This is what I said in Geneva during the closing ceremony of the special session on social development. We must summon all the necessary political will, mobilize the requisite resources and focus on people-centred priorities to defeat poverty, hunger, want and fear from the face of the Earth once and for all. Compassion, generosity and sharing are noble virtues that should govern human relations.

While the United Nations is not a perfect Organization, it is the only true, universal and representative international common home we have. It is here, and nowhere else, that we can together ensure world peace and development for the benefit of all. This must be our common hope and expectation from the United Nations Millennium Summit, which starts tomorrow in this majestic Hall of States and "We the Peoples".

I have a long roster of wonderful people to thank. I will happily do that in the fullness of time.

Agenda item 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We are now coming to the end of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. May I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the fifty-fourth session

The President: I declare closed the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.